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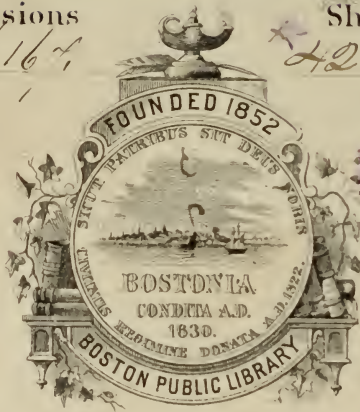
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FRANCE, MEXICO,
AND THE
CONFEDERATE STATES.

BY
M. M. CHEVALIER.

TRANSLATED BY
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P R E F A C E.

THE pamphlet of which the following pages are a translation has obtained a world-wide notoriety as embodying the first coherent view which has been made public of the designs of NAPOLEON III. in the New World.

It has been commonly attributed to M. MICHEL CHEVALIER, one of the first of living French publicists; but I have reason to believe that this is an error. There can be no doubt, however, that it sets forth with substantial accuracy the general theory of American affairs in favor at the Tuileries. Nor can it be well denied that the actual position of France in Mexico threatens to make the adoption of such a policy towards the United States, as is here sketched out, a matter almost of necessity with the Emperor.

It would seem, therefore, to be important that the public mind should make itself familiar with possibilities which involve issues so vast and so vital to our future welfare as those which are suggested in these few but pregnant pages.

THE TRANSLATOR.

NEW YORK, Oct. 5, 1863.



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FRANCE, MEXICO,

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CONFEDERATE STATES.

IN France, from the earliest times, distant expeditions, when they began, have always provoked bitter criticism on the part of the Opposition, and have met with but little sympathy among the supporters of order. We are inclined to attribute to this fact the relative inferiority of our country as a commercial and colonial power, while it occupies the second and almost the first rank as a naval power. The Frenchman is infinitely better fitted for action than for traffic, and in war he commonly considers only its military glory, sometimes its political results; never its commercial consequences. In this respect we are at once superior and inferior to our allies the English—superior by all the greatness of our generosity and our disinterestedness; inferior by all the depth of their calculations and their mercantile genius. Thus it was that when, after the rupture of the treaty of La Soledad, England and Spain, which had intervened in Mexico under the same pretext as France, retired from the intervention, leaving to France the cost and the consequences of an expedition which had been commenced in common, our country as with one voice deplored the situation in which we had been left by our allies. No one then suspected, and no one then chose to suspect, the fruitful results of our intervention in the affairs of Mexico. It

was then fashionable to calculate the sums which it would cost to transport a soldier from Cherbourg to Vera Cruz, and it was attempted to be shown that our only object was to impose upon the Mexicans a form of government more or less hostile to their taste and to their convictions. President Juarez, notwithstanding his numerous refusals of justice, his open contempt of pledged faith, and the divisions excited by European demagogues, remained the sacred representative of the national will of Mexico, the paragon of liberal ideas. It was repeated *ad nauseam* that the Emperor, yielding to a natural love of adventure, had allowed himself to be seduced by fallacious stories of the wealth of the ancient empire of the Montezumas; that having thrown himself headlong into an expedition which could have no end, he persevered in it through obstinacy, and that our soldiers were marching to an impossible, useless, dangerous, and ruinous conquest. Unfortunately, the failure of the first attack on Puebla offered the enemies of the expedition a natural opportunity for redoubling their clamors. The echoes of the *Palais Bourbon** rang with calumnies which up to that time had been confined to the purlieus of foreign newspaper offices, and nothing less than the authoritative eloquence of Mr. Billault was required to clear up the question and dispel the clouds which masked the future of our intervention. The fruitless, or even the unfortunate result of a warlike operation proves nothing against the origin and object of a war. The origin of the actual war in Mexico is more than justified by the wrongs which France is bent upon redressing. The object of that war is to aid the Mexicans in establishing, according to their own free will and choice, a government which may have some chance of stability.

The failure of the first attack on Puebla simply proved that we had been ill-informed as to the military resources which intimidation had enabled Juarez to command. It neither diminished the gravity of our interests nor lessened the importance of our object. It inflicted no damage even upon our military reputation. It was then decided that a complete army corps, armed with formidable artillery and adequate means of transportation, should be embarked for Mexico as soon as the season

* In this palace the Corps Legislatif holds its sessions.

would allow. The money expenditure required by this considerable movement of troops and warlike material was simply an advance made upon the enterprise. Where so many people insisted upon seeing nothing but a little glory to win, Napoleon III. had already laid the foundations of a completely new system of policy. While for everybody else the Mexican war was a mere military question, he was limiting and determining the part to be played by our soldiers, our seamen, and our diplomatists, in this enterprise which is to give to France the commercial rank she has a right to hold.

“In the actual state of the civilization of the world the prosperity of America is not a matter of indifference to Europe, for this prosperity feeds our factories and keeps our commerce alive. It is our interest that the republic of the United States should be powerful and prosperous, but it is not our interest that it should possess itself of the whole Mexican Gulf, that it should thence domineer over the Antilles as well as South America, and that it alone should control the distribution of the products of the New World.” This passage, from the instructions given by the Emperor to General Forey, victoriously answers those who now ask why we have been expending men and money, to found a regular government in Mexico. France must oppose the absorption of Southern America by Northern America ; she must in like manner oppose the degradation of the Latin race on the other side of the ocean ; she must establish the integrity and security of our West Indian colonies. It is the interests which compel France to sympathize with the Confederate States which have led our banners up to the walls of Mexico.

The recognition of the Southern States will be the consequence of our intervention, or rather our intervention has prepared, facilitated, and made possible a diplomatic act which will consecrate the final separation and secession of those states from the American Union. The thirty thousand Frenchmen who to-day occupy Mexico or are pursuing Juarez to San Luis Potosi, are the advanced guard of an immense commercial army, and their bayonets will open to our commerce harbors which have been too long closed upon it. Let us then hear no more of these mendacious outcries over the emptiness of our projects in Mexico. What Napoleon III. means he means distinctly, he

has long meant it, he will continue to mean and to will it until it is achieved. He means to regenerate our trans-Atlantic commerce, to restore to it or to create for it profitable avenues and outlets ; he means that our national industry in all time to come shall be able to provide itself with the materials indispensable to its success. This is his meaning, and he will pursue this purpose until he has accomplished it. Now that the solution is so near at hand, there would be no particular merit in predicting it, if the easy prophecy were not accompanied with a complete exposition of the advantages which France is to draw from its fulfilment.

II.

When we examine the map of Mexico the fortunate and peculiar geographical situation of this privileged country at once attracts our attention. Bathed by either ocean, it lies at an equal distance between Asia and Europe. It has free communication with the richest and most commercial peoples of the old continent, and were the public mind reassured, and the movements of industry directed by a serious, well established government, Mexico might rival the most commercial nations of the new world. The general temperature of Mexico is hardly more than two or three degrees higher than the average temperature of Rome or Naples, while the physical conformation of the country is at least as favorable as its maritime position. With the exception of a narrow coast line on some parts of its frontier, especially about Vera Cruz, the climate is wholesome, agreeable, mild ; and traders who, having long inhabited these distant shores, return to Europe, always look back upon them with regret. Mexico, which might furnish the whole world with precious woods and splendid dyes, could nourish France and Spain with its cereals in a year of famine. It is the only tropical country whose soil abundantly yields the finest grains. The generous loins of its mountains, rising eight or nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, are filled with almost inexhaustible mines, which have never yet been adequately worked. The only ones now really opened, and which are able to endure the enormous taxation imposed by autokra-

tic and ephemeral governments, driven to procure money at any cost, belong to English companies; and the number of them is relatively small. We may be certain that the development of the mineral wealth of Mexico is still in its infancy. The natives have never succeeded in it. But what the English never could, we who have shown ourselves their equals, at every international exhibition, in the industrial arts, may teach the natives of Mexico to do.

When one runs over the catalogue of the riches of Mexico, its wealth in grain and gold—those two vital forces of nations—one is tempted to ask how it is that its inhabitants make no more of their advantages? Why is it that notwithstanding European aid the movement of industry in that country has never been orderly and regular? It is hardly possible that anarchy should have taken root in the needs and aspirations of a population too sparse for the country it inhabits. In Mexico disorder has never arisen from the lower ranks of society, it descends from the upper and governmental regions. The people are not the agitators, and brigandage itself has been most commonly undertaken by persons of property, generals, even by the aides-de-camp of presidents. The Indians, not naturally industrious, live on the plantations or factories of Europeans, whilst the mixed race seeks in tyranny, exactions, and robbery, the facile existence which it does not care to ask from labor. In short, although there is an actual want of population in Mexico, there is more idleness there than industry; and this unfortunate state of things, this destruction of agriculture and industry by the depredations of indolence, will continue to exist till European emigration shall modify the relations of the three races which barely people these immense regions. Mexico waits for—invites—demands emigration; not the unhealthy foolish emigration which transports from one latitude to another, creatures without industry or intelligence, but the emigration of the capital and the intelligence which find no room in our social system. Such an emigration it is which has given to the United States industry, wealth, and courage, and let us add has, at the same time, secured the quiet of England. Whoever has lived long in England must have been struck with the flagrant and perpetual contradiction between the private genius of the English man, always disposed to

commercial, maritime, and industrial adventure, and the public genius of the English nation, which is radically hostile to all revolutionary ideas. The reason of this is not to be looked for in the perfection of English institutions; for if we admit the superiority of their representative system, we must also allow that their customs and social laws, particularly in respect to property, are very far from being perfect. We in France, on the contrary, have always been fond of political adventure. Revolution for revolution's sake was a passion with our fathers; and the actual generation of Frenchmen indulged in the same passion in 1848 at no small cost. But we are not easily seduced by private enterprises. The thing which pleases us in politics displeases us in business, and our individual temperament has not always been so high as our national temperament; nevertheless, for some years past we have been gaining in industrial daring. The calm and the solidity of the institutions which France has recently founded, repel beyond our frontiers those undisciplined and ardent dreamers, who make the very emigrants of whom we have been speaking. Let the certainty of protection lead this population to Mexico, and the age of its regeneration will not be long in coming to that country, thenceforth filled with new inhabitants, ready for all progress, familiar with the newest discoveries of modern industry, and supported by the intelligent liberalism of the flag of France. It is beginning to be seen that our national interest, much more than the desire of adding a new name to the long list of our military victories, has led France into Mexico. Let us not be troubled, then, with regard to the future of this expedition. Whether Maximilian accept or refuse the throne of Mexico; whether any other prince accept that throne or not; or whether beneath the wings of our eagles some as yet nameless government be established there, the influence of France will remain in Mexico. The French soldier takes his country with him. Our army, made up of workmen and laborers who all look forward to their return to the workshop or the plough, is an army of creators, and not of destroyers. It takes into Mexico all that Mexico needs: 1st. Cohesion; because it is the most complete and sincere expression of modern democracy; 2nd. Order; because it permits all citizens of that unfortunate nation to

develop their own interests; 3d. Industry; because it furnishes to languishing enterprise, workmen, foremen, artisans, managers, because it familiarizes the Mexican people with the wonders of France and of French industry; 4th. An army; by its example and its instruction.

Thus, then, and naturally, by a diffusion and profusion of interests and of labor, the desire and need of firmness in the political system will be fortified. In the great movement of our country, industrial and financial interests control and conduct society. Questions of politics disappear before social questions. Twenty years ago the opposition was republican—to-day it is social. And the theory of human equality no longer assumes to reduce the great to the condition of the lowly, but to raise the lowly to the level of the great. The problems of general prosperity, of the increase of wages, of cheap production, of public hygiene, can be much more easily solved under a powerful government. The empire has disciplined socialism, and put it to use. The empire has conquered and decapitated anarchy. This it is that the empire is to do in Mexico, and this it cannot do securely and properly until the Confederate States have been recognised.

III.

If war had not broken out between the Northern and Southern States of America, Europe would not yet have been impressed with the dangers which threaten her from the power of the Union.

Although she had become tributary to the new world, Europe had taken no precaution to prevent the consummation of a crisis which she had never foreseen, and which for two years she has been enduring. It has cost us something to learn how precarious is the fortune of an industry compelled to seek its raw materials in a single market, to all the exactions and all the vicissitudes of which it must necessarily submit.

In this respect the secession of the Confederate States is an event particularly favorable to France—for England has now no interest in the cessation of hostilities and the consequent constitution of an intermediate power between the Federal Union and the Spanish American States.

England trembles for Canada, to which the North, after the war, may look for the compensation of its losses. The commerce of England profits by the misfortunes of American commerce—she looks with satisfaction on the exhaustion alike of the South and of the North. She supplies both parties with arms, and while the southern export of cotton is suspended she is increasing the cotton culture of India. England, then, will never take the initiative in recognising the Confederate States, and the way in which our propositions of pacific intervention were twice received by her, ought to dispel all doubts on this head.

France, on the other hand, cannot hope to find the cotton which her factories need elsewhere than in the South. Every attempt at the culture has failed, and it is unfortunately probable that every such attempt will continue to fail. The cotton culture, like the grape culture, is a question of soils. A vine from Bordeaux or the Rhine, transplanted under the same latitudes and climates, will yield neither a Chateau Margaux nor a Johannisberg. The wine changes with the soil: so it is with cotton—its quality degenerates with the soil. Furthermore, the question is not to produce some sort of cotton, good, bad, or “ordinary,” but to produce it at fair prices. Now, as well in respect to cheapness as to quality, the cotton of the South surpasses all others. The Federals are so well aware of this, that the war which they are waging is really and mainly a war of interest. The producing, agricultural South was the commercial vassal of the North, which insists upon keeping its best customer: emancipation is merely a skillful device for entrapping the sympathies of European liberalism. If the North were victorious it would never probe the slavery question to the core. Once masters of the negro race, northern men would be slow to compromise the cotton culture, for the sake of which they are so savagely maintaining an unjust war; they would then hasten to admit that it is impossible to change the vital economical condition of an immense region by a battle or a stroke of the pen. The northern idea of the abolition of slavery, by making the negro food for powder or by exiling him from his home to die of hunger, is now thoroughly understood in Europe. Our notions of philanthropy and our moral sense alike revolt from these ferocious exaggerations of the love of liberty.

Honest and intelligent men are no longer to be duped by these coarse devices, and Mr. Lincoln's abolition cry finds no echo.

If there be sceptics on this point, let us remind them of the Lynch law which prevails in the North ; of the way in which the Indians are still hunted down ; of the decree published but the other day by the Governor of Minnesota, offering a reward of twenty-five dollars for every Indian scalp. These are disagreeable things to happen among a people who profess to be fighting for the abolition of slavery ; and were that people to triumph, the poor negroes would find their way to liberty a path of thorns.

But the first European power which shall recognise the Confederate States will have a right to obtain much more for the negro than the Federals could secure for him through their "Union by victory." This first power being France, we may be sure that the cause of civilization, humanity, and progress, will not be forgotten by her. All that is difficult, even impossible, while the conflict rages, will become easy with the return of peace. The emancipation of the blacks, the complete abolition of slavery, can only be the work of peace and of time ; and an alliance with the South will effect that great social renovation which England, with her "right of search," has so vainly sought to bring about.

Moreover, slavery cannot possibly be made a serious argument against the recognition of the South. France and England live on good terms with Spain and Brazil ; they even protect Egypt and Turkey, and these countries maintain slavery with no show of a disposition to abolish it. France will use her influence to secure the gradual emancipation of the slaves without making slavery a ground for refusing recognition.

The North, made keen-eyed by selfishness, has certainly foreseen this ; and the famous Monroe doctrine is nothing more nor less than a policy of insurance against civilization. What has become of those glorious days when the fierce and touchy patriotism of the Americans boasted of a confederacy free from public debt, of those days when political liberty in nowise trammelled individual liberty, and the free citizen of a free state roamed freely over a free soil ? What has the North done with the prestige and the glory which it used for ever to parade

before the dazzled eyes of European populations, scarce able to believe in the existence of so much happiness and liberty?

They have all been sacrificed to the Union!

“Perish liberty, rather than we should lose the provinces that support us! Let us mortgage the finances of the future, but let us not give up the states which fill the coffers of the treasury! What though they long to leave us: we, we, the men of the North, will never consent to it!”

And so, were the Union reconstructed to-day, its debt would almost equal the debt of England: the free soil of the Republic has been disgraced by daily and audacious attacks upon personal liberty: the title of American citizen offers no protection, and imposes no sacred duties upon him who wears it.

The “model republic” exists only as a memory, and those who love it are left to cherish the image of a greatness and a grace for ever gone.

The pride of the North will never stoop to admit the superiority of southern men: and yet it is from these that the Union drew its best statesmen and the majority of its Presidents. The pride of the North will bend only to necessity, because it has not kept pace with the progress of the age. To-day the Americans of the North are as completely foreign to the family of nations as they were twenty years ago. They understand nothing but the narrowest and most mechanical mercantilism, the art of purchase and sale; and they long to annihilate the Confederate States in order that the South, by its intelligence, its enterprise, and the talents of its statesmen, may not throw down the rampart they have built up against *Europeanism*. It was by Northern men that Juarez was and is encouraged to persevere in his resistance—but the other day, at Frankfort, their consul on a public and solemn occasion raised the flag of the fallen President of Mexico; and, although the changes which have taken place in Mexico have not yet been diplomatically published and recognised, this suspicious piece of bravado proves that the sympathies of the North would seize on peace as the opportunity for throwing men and money upon the country in which France is seeking to found a new empire.

The American war, from which France has suffered more than England, can be useful to us only if the North and South part company definitively; and for these reasons:

1. The Confederate States will be our allies, and will guarantee us against attack by the North.

2. Mexico, developed by our efforts, and sheltered from the attacks of the North, will reward all our hopes.

3. Our factories will be insured the supplies which they absolutely require.

Were the American war to end otherwise, all the adventurers whom peace would let loose would simply fling themselves into Mexico, and all that we have gone so far to secure would be gathered in by the men of the North.

IV.

The American question is not one of those which can be deferred for solution to a more convenient season.

It has been put to us point-blank: it must be settled peremptorily.

Every one now admits that Europe can live in peace under a perpetual imminence of questions—Eastern, Roman, Ducal-Holstein, and others—because no one can see his way to any sharp and definite solution of these great international problems.

Moreover, the interests disturbed by these questions are either religious or political: they are not commercial; and they can be discussed. Now, in politics, whatever can be discussed need not be peremptorily dealt with. Time is the great allayer of political and religious emotions.

The American question, we repeat, has been peremptorily put, and will be completely answered. Now, there is no possible peace in the reconstruction of the Union. The two elements have disengaged themselves, and cannot be recombined.

The North, whether in the domain of arms, of ideas, or of production, cannot and will not absorb the South.

We see, then, that neither peace nor absorption nor conquest is possible. There is nothing left but secession at the end of the war.

While the Americans of the North could make Europe believe they were fighting against rebels it was the duty of Europe to let them go on, despite the sufferings to which Europe was exposed by the contest; but the states of the South have set

forth their policy, their purposes, their rights; they desire separation; they refuse to enrich the North; they are tired of always giving and never receiving; they have determined to live their own life. The North American exaggeration of commercial interests has borne its fruits, and the South proposes to reconstitute its national system with an eye to its own interests. Now, since those interests conform to those of France; since the cause of the South is not only just, but logical; France does not hesitate to declare her sympathies, and her first act of sympathy naturally must be the recognition of the Confederate States.

Recognised by France, the strength of those states is quintupled at once; and their adversaries lose all that they gain. For other states are waiting to follow the example of France; among the commercial powers of the second rank many desire the establishment of a confederate republic as a means to the decentralization of the Union. These powers, hitherto kept aloof by the phantom of slavery, will follow France, because the whole world knows that France lends her aid only to works of social progress.

These powers will naturally be joined by Spain, which possesses Havana. Austria, which will be more directly involved in the affairs of the new world if she accepts the Mexican throne for Maximilian, must likewise recognise the Confederate States.

And England will then do what we have done. She will recognise the South.

The Northern States will no longer persevere in a strife thenceforth become hopeless and useless.

The navy of France is an argument which, in case of necessity, would support her diplomatic action.

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“DRIFTINGS OF THE WAR, AND THE NATION'S NEW DEPARTURE.”

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

GEN'L WILLIAM S. HILLYER,

TO AUGMENT THE

BENEVOLENT FUND

OF THE

Veteran Soldiers' & Sailors' Association

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